

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY154
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Name of Service:	Tir na Nog Playschool
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Address of Service:	Cappawhite National School, Church St, Cappawhite, Co Tipperary
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Eircode:	E34 V598
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Name of Registered Provider:	Maria Buckley
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Service type:	Part Time
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Date of Inspection:	08/09/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	21	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Glenmorgan Building, Ferryhouse, Clonmel, Co Tipperary E91RF38
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Inspection undertaken by:	Antoinette McNamara
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

Conditions if applicable	N/A
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Description of service

Tir na Nog Playschool is an early years service offering part-time and sessional care and education in the village of Cappawhite Co Tipperary. The service is registered to cater for children aged 2 to 6 years old. The premises consists of a prefabricated single storey building, located on the grounds of the national. A second prefabricated building is used for the provision of a school aged service. Outdoor play facilities are accessible directly from the classroom and additional shared space is available on the grounds.

Staffing

There were two staff members and the registered provider working directly with children on the day of inspection. Staff held qualifications in Early Childhood Education at level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications. There was evidence of continuous professional development undertaken by staff such as the Leadership for Inclusion programme and Tusla Quality and Regulatory Framework training.

Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

Regulation 9 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(4) Management and recruitment,
Regulation 11(1)(2) Staffing levels,

Regulation 15 (1) (a-i) (3) Records in relation to a pre-school child,
Regulation 19 (1)(a) Health, welfare, and development of the child,
Regulation 21 Equipment and materials
Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety, and welfare of the child,
Regulation 25 (1) (2) First aid,
Regulation 26 (1) (4) Fire safety and
Regulation 28 Insurance.

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the *registered provider, person in charge, staff and children* who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-

- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,
- (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,
- (c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and
- (d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (2) and subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), each employee working directly with children attending the service holds at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The registered provided was the designated person in charge and a named deputy person in charge was available to cover as needed.

(b) The designated person in charge was present for the inspection.

The staff files for three staff were reviewed on the day.

(2)(a) Two written and validated references were available for each staff member working at the service.

(b) Where past employer references were not available, there were references from sources such as previous schools and colleges.

(c) Garda vetting was available on file for each staff member working in the service. Garda vetting had been renewed, in compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Not applicable. Review of the curriculum vitae indicated that police vetting was not required.

(4) Certificates of qualifications for the staff working directly with children were available on file demonstrating that they held a qualification at the minimum level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that there is always an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.

Compliance Information

(1) On the day of inspection there were adequate numbers of staff working directly with the children.

(2) The person in charge ensured that the adult to child ratio was maintained throughout the day of inspection. On the morning of inspection there were 21 children cared for by 3 staff members.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

*(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-
(c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

A sample of 10 completed registration forms were reviewed as part of the inspection process:

- (1) The registration forms contained the required information as detailed under parts (a) to (i) of this regulation.
- (3) The registration forms were available on the premises for inspection by an authorised person.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(a) each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child, and

Compliance Information

1(a)

Basic needs:

The service had a healthy eating policy. The children brought a packed lunch to eat at snack time. Perishable foods were stored in a fridge in the service. Staff sat with the children during snack time to supervise them, encourage conversation and to help if needed, for example with opening lunch boxes.

The children brought a drink bottle into the service. The bottles were accessible to the children on the table where they could get a drink when they wanted.

The children enjoyed freedom of movement in the classroom on the day of inspection. They had a range of activities to choose from during free play.

Children who were able were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care. For example, children who were toilet trained were able to access the toilet throughout the day. Tissues were freely available for children to blow their own noses and wipe their faces. Regular hand washing was observed by the children.

The available space within the classroom supported the children to explore their environment and to freely engage with materials. Outdoor play was promoted and included as part of the daily programme of activities.

Supporting relationships around children:

The children benefitted from the very favourable adult to child ratios which enabled each child to receive as much individual attention and support as they needed.

The small group size supported the children to get to know each other well and to develop friendships within the group.

The inspection took place one week after the start of the new school year. The group consisted of children who were new to the service and those returning for their second year in the service. The children were settled into the routines of the service and were confident in their exploration and play.

The staff met parents each day at drop off and collection times and communicated with them in a variety of ways including in person, via phone and messaging service.

The staff were observed to be engaged with the children, to sit on the floor or at tables where the children were engaged in activities and to support the children's exploration of their environment and what interested them.

Staff had helped the children create areas of familiarity in the classrooms to promote each child's identity and belonging such as a birthday wall and individual pigeonholes for the children's belongings.

Before snack time the children sat at the tables and sang songs. A staff member played the guitar while the children sang a song introducing each other. During the song the children could stand up and wave to all the class.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The service consisted of one large preschool room which was very well equipped with a range of toys, materials and furniture suitable to stage of development of the children attending the service. The classroom was very well resourced. The room had defined interest areas, including the home corner, art and craft materials, a construction area, a dolls house, small world materials, and dress up. There were low level open shelves around the room where Montessori work, jigsaws/puzzles and manipulative play toys were easily accessible to the children. There was a well-resourced library and a cosy corner for reading and rest in the room. The children's artwork was displayed in the classroom.

There were several outdoor area's available to the children. Directly off the classroom was an enclosed covered area. The children had a variety of toys and equipment outside including a sand pit, a kitchen, building blocks,

blackboards and mirror boards to choose from. The children also had access to the national school outdoor facilities. There was a large secure grass playing field to the rear of the premises. There was also a small play area to the front of the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

A registered provider shall ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child attending the service and that the environment of the service is safe.

Compliance Information

General safety:

The premises was adequately secured to prevent children leaving unsupervised and unauthorised persons gaining access. The entrance door to the service had to be opened by a staff member. The outdoor play areas were secured to prevent children leaving. Cleaning agents and hazardous materials were stored inaccessible to children. There were pinch covers on the door to prevent injury to children.

Infection control:

The staff and children were observed to follow good hand hygiene practices such as washing hands before eating and after using the toilet. There was a sink in the classroom as well as in the sanitary accommodation areas to facilitate hand washing. There was warm running water, liquid soap, and paper hand towels available throughout the service. Hand washing reminders and steps were displayed at both adult and children's eye level. Children were also observed to independently wash their hands in the classroom after activities. Foot pedal bins were present in the service. There was tissues and a designated tissue bin available to the children. There were also cough and sneezing reminders displayed at the children's eye level. The service was clean and well maintained by staff. Tables were cleaned after play and before snack time. Perishable foods were stored in a fridge.

Fire safety:

Fire exits were found to be unobstructed on the day of inspection.

There were fire evacuation procedures displayed in a prominent area within the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 25 - First aid

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a person trained in first aid for children is, at all times, immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that a suitably equipped first aid box for children-

(a) is safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises, and

(b) is available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.

Compliance Information

(1) There were staff trained in first aid responder (FAR) available to the children attending the service.

(2)(a) There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in an easily accessible position.

(b) The first aid box was available to the children attending the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-

(a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and

(b) the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) There was a record of fire drills that had taken place in the service. The last fire drill was recorded as having taken place in June 2025, the service was closed for July and August. Staff advised that monthly fire drills were completed when the service was running.

(b) There was a record available demonstrating that the smoke alarm system was last serviced in April 2025 and the firefighting equipment was last serviced in April 2025.

(4) There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire displayed in a conspicuous position on the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

An in-date certificate was in place to demonstrate that the service was insured to provide full day care for the number of children the service is registered to accommodate.